The COMMONWEAL

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Russian Developments

THE major problem continues to be that of working out a *modus vivendi* between Britain, ourselves and Russia. This, we have always insisted, can only be done by the establishment of a real equilibrium between the USSR and the Western Powers: concessions cannot all come from one side; firmness must not all be exercised by one side. And we must remember that after twenty-five years of suspicion—not to call it anything worse—Russia has psychologically more reason to be distrustful of Britain and ourselves than we have to be distrustful of her. Though the score is not far from even. Coupled with deep understanding on both sides, there must be the avoidance of foolish blunders on our part. One cannot help feeling that our present non-fraternization policy in Germany must contrast strangely with the broad fraternization permitted to Russian occupation troops. And if the Russians have been chary about allowing American correspondents to visit territories they occupy, the censorship rules of our own SHAEF are nothing to brag about. As has been pointed out by Father George H. Dunne, S.J., in the *Historical Bulletin* for May of this year,

> The world which will emerge from this war and from the peace settlement will in many respects fall short of the ideal of perject justice: not only because of Poland and the Baltic States, but because of Hongkong, and Burma, and Indo-China, and India; and because of the American Negro; and because of the Southern share-cropper, the Okies, the tens of thousands of Americans with insufficient health care, insufficient food, insufficient housing, insufficient education; and because of the tens of thousands of political prisoners languishing in Franco's jails; and because of a great many other things.

Without equilibrium we cannot accomplish that which it is our duty to try to accomplish. And the rhetorical gymnastics in which Messrs. Duclos and Browder have been indulging lately—whether or not they presage a shift in the Party Line—indicate how little equilibrium there is at present. All of us need peace and all of us need each other to win peace. That is what we must remember.

Toward Greater Social Security

THE SCOPE of the new Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill, introduced in Congress May 24, is so vast as to exceed the scope of brief editorial comment. Few will quarrel with such general objectives as that of extending social insurance of various kinds to a larger body of citizens, or making the system more genuinely pay-as-you-go than it now is. Both employers and employees would at first feel the raising of the payroll taxes of each from 1 to 4 percent. But unless it should be frozen again by Congressional action that contribution is to be raised to 2½ percent each by the first of next year anyway.

It is hardly news that many areas of this country are badly lacking in adequate medical facilities. The new bill would meet this need by providing loans on the basis of surveys conducted by the individual states. (The Surgeon General is authorized by the bill to make the public health surveys in such states as do not themselves make such investigations by January, 1948.) On the basis of the data made available new hospitals are to be built, others enlarged over a period of ten years. On construction matters the Surgeon General is to have the assistance of the Federal Works Agency. In general this part of the program appears admirable.

In the highly controversial "socialized medicine" section much care is exercised to safeguard "freedom of medical practice." Each insured person may choose his own doctor from among those who have voluntarily agreed to go into the system; "each doctor or group of doctors is free to go in or stay out of the insurance system." Participating doctors are free to accept or reject patients who choose them and to set the method of payment. Even this may be modified if found unsatisfactory. Qualifying specialists may charge special rates. In other words many objections to the original bill have been taken into account. However, physicians who are flatly against "socialized medicine," who believe the present system to be adequate and prefer to continue giving

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free service at the clinics and charging the wealthy what they can afford—to continue to practice in independence and according to their conscience—will not be mollified by the safeguards outlined at the beginning of this section of the new bill. They have less reason for opposition.

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As the nation comes to grips with so vast a blueprint for social security, it is worth glancing at one element in the new system beginning operation in Canada, July 1. Taking a leaf out of Bismarck's lexicon, Mackenzie King has tried to forestall the threatening CCF by putting through his own comprehensive social program. One of its points is a monthly payment plan for dependent children, at a cost of a quarter billion annually. About eighty percent of Canada's families are eligible to receive from $5 to $8 per month for each child up to the fifth—and from there on at a slight rate reduction. For many children it means adequate food and clothing, regular school attendance and the assurance of a sturdy youth. No wage and hour standards can protect as they should without adequate family allowance differentials of some sort.

The New Cabinet Posts

PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S three Cabinet appointments seem in line with the rather quiet tenor of his administration to date. The new Attorney General has not got the color or ability of Mr. Biddle; he is known as a political regular, and will probably fit excellently into the Cabinet team, though there is little reason to expect anything startling from him. He has both the merits and the faults of an organization man. The new Secretary of Labor seems acceptable to union leaders; not too much is known about him, and his appointment, like the appointments of his colleagues, is especially notable because it represents a slackening of Eastern dominance in the Cabinet. The new Secretary of Agriculture, who has served as Chairman of the House committee on agriculture, has perhaps aroused the most favorable comment of all since he is the best known of the three men.

Most political observers are agreed that Secretary of State Stettinius, for purely technical reasons, will have to be replaced. (Under an old Congressional Act which it appears impossible to modify because of Congressional sentiment, the Secretary of State is next in line for the Presidential office, and since Mr. Stettinius is not a party man and has never stood for office, his succession would be politically unthinkable.) Hence there is nothing invidious in indicating a preference among the men available for this cabinet post. Some of the radio and newspaper gossip boys have mentioned the name of Senator Fulbright for this position. Certainly the suggestion is excellent. Mr. Fulbright comes from the West yet has a real knowledge of and an intimate feeling for world problems. He is universally liked and respected and his appointment would bring new and young blood into the State Department.

Penny Wise

IT HAS long been a tradition that a worthy function of the American Government was to facilitate the dissemination of useful information among the citizenry. To this end the Post Office Department has special flat rates regardless of distance for the non-advertising matter in periodicals which enjoy the second-class mailing privilege. Because of this precedent Mr. Roosevelt, by executive order, extended to books the flat cent and a half per pound rate in 1938. This seemed fair in that books contain no advertising matter and constitute the least commercial source of information. Congress later raised the rate to a three cents a pound flat rate, still considerably below the old fourth class or parcel post rates (by zones) for books. Today there is a slight additional war tax for book postage. So far very reasonable.

Meanwhile a thorough, non-political investigation of Post Office finances has been made. It is revealed that last year book postage transactions—which represent but 1 percent of the Post Office's business—registered a loss of a little over $2,000,000. (The second class service lost $99,000,000 and the parcel post even more, while first class mail accounted for the department's handsome net profit.) And reversing the philosophy of assisting in the dissemination of useful information, a movement is afoot to make each category of Post Office operations a profitable enterprise. On twenty-four hours' notice American publishers were to appear in Washington for first hearings on HR 3235, introduced by Congressman McKenzie of Louisiana. This bill would, among other things, put the sending of books on a mailing zone basis. The postage charge for local deliveries of books would be reasonable enough, as would large shipments for such distance as, say, between the Eastern Seaboard and the Middle West. It would gravely penalize book shipments of all sizes across the country and the mailing of single copies anywhere outside the publisher's immediate vicinity. The fact that for years American publishers have been unable to set up an adequate bookstore distribution system means great dependence upon direct mail. Such prohibitive mailing rates would be ruinous. In a political democracy such as ours is it more important at this time to show a monetary profit in one distinctly smaller category of the operations of the Post Office, or to continue a system which makes possible a wide dissemination of information in book form?

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Field Day

IT IS like a twenty-first birthday. In college everybody thinks he is grown up and perhaps he is; perhaps that is when the best thoughts come and even a tendency to match the thoughts with action, and a certain devotion—that is the way it looks like, looking back. But at the time there was something missing; there was something to wait for. Even if the steward in the club was willing to play at a solemn game with you that you were grown up, even if the bartender at the Touraine served you as soon as or even before he served the salesman for Automatic Locking Devices, Inc., even if you were in love or could already look back at the failure of a love. There was that business of waiting to be twenty-one. That was the day on which everything was to start. Seriously.

There had been the day of the first long pants. There had been a series of disillusionments. Everything that promised to be a starting point, when you reached it was not really a starting point. It was only one other of the points which make up a line, or it would be a point in time and therefore demonstrably inexistent. Because you could not stop time to look at it; when you looked it was gone. So that one might have reasoned that a twenty-first birthday would be like the other birthdays or like the graduation days, from kindergarten or from anything else. A wonderful day but not the start of anything. The kind of day that followed the field day at the school. (The station wagons, the cars are parked round the field; there are always fifteen unoccupied youths who have discovered the sack of potatoes for the potato race; they start playing catch with the potatoes; then they try to see how far they can throw them; they become aware that the potatoes break and splash when they fall; they throw the potatoes at the girls; red and blue flags mark the track for the relay race; Jillie wins the relay races for the blues; there is a fat boy with a complaint, oh Sir, Billy cut inside a flag, I should say so, I should know Sir, I was running next to him; Jillie wins the senior dash against Norah, Captain of the reds; the bright silver cups are on the table in the sunlight I want to thank Miss Soandso without whose help this field day could not have been successful, I want to thank all the parents, I am so sorry we did not have time for the three legged race, I want to thank all of you boys and girls for the fine spirit you have shown. . . . Three dogs start tearing each other to pieces.)

There would be the field day and then the graduation day and the twenty-first birthday, the day you get married, the day the war ended in Europe.

One of the troubles is that it ended twice; it is as if a man had two twenty-first birthdays. The magic does not work twice.

So that the end of the war in Europe this second time may not be more the start of anything than it was when it ended the last time. It may be but it may not be. You have not got the same hope anyway. It is the same thing with anyone's life. You can say tomorrow is another day but after you have said it long enough it is all mixed up. Tomorrow already is today and very much yesterday.

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For Americans, the accident by which we have President Truman is a very fortunate one. His presence serves to break the expectancy with which we accompanied President Roosevelt toward victory. The man who leads a nation in war carries all the nation's hopes about the peace. He is answerable for the peace. On the day of victory he is supposed to have all the answers. The day of victory is the new day, the day of the new peace. With the peace, everything starts fresh. That of course is the way everyone feels throughout the war. As throughout childhood. Then victory comes (the twenty-first birthday comes) and there are ruins or there are not ruins, but each man, everywhere stands looking at what there is round him, with whatever hunger or content he has, whatever plans he may have, with whatever he has already lost, with whatever he may still hope for—knowing only that it was absurd to suppose that this one day, more than another, would show life clear, new, all grown up and strong.

It is then, in victory and amidst ruins, that men everywhere are wondering with what instruments, traditions and strength of government they may advance through the uncertainties that surround them. In America we have a thirty-third President, one more of a long line of Presidents, we have the Congress, the Supreme Court, and a one armed baseball player. That does not make a new world but it is something through which we can expect to continue to have a country in whatever world it must exist.

In France there are no Trumans. In Europe people have to face the inevitable disappointments of victory, they have to make their plans, without having the continuity of governmental tradition which Truman represents. They know that they are not in a new world, and everything that was in the old world is broken. Even in England Mr. Churchill had to go to the people in order that he should be to England what Mr. Truman is to America. England is fortunate; there is no nation on the continent as fortunate.

The Continent came to this holiday, this birthday into freedom, bringing all its hopes and expectancy; when it looked out there was heavy rain over ruins.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Where Justice Is Due

Italian repugnance to racist doctrine

Richard Arvay

WHEN the day of judgment comes and the books of time are balanced, then shall we be duty bound to step before the presiding tribunal with the undeniable testimony that even under the most trying period of recent history the Italian people bore staunchly and proudly the golden banner of humanity. And together with us, who are refugees in Fort Ontario, there will be thousands of other refugees in Italy, who were not lucky enough to reach this country but who will also bear witness to the decency of the Italian people. It is our duty to do everything possible to make sure that this will be recorded on the credit side of the ledger: the Italians saved 40,000 Jews from deportation—perhaps even more.

One might say, that what the Italians did was no more than what human decency requires. Surely, one may say this. But did all nations fulfill the simple commands of human decency. In France, for instance, where under the name of Vichy pseudo-fascism came to power, collaborators worked as handy-men of atrocity. We, who had hoped to find in France our second mother country, instead found ourselves starving and freezing in concentration camps, or we chopped wood in forced labor companies. In burning heat or cold, from gray morning until weary nightfall we toiled, directed by cruel and corrupt supervisors. And these disciples of the Vichy government were debased enough to steal the few cents we received as wages for our labor.

The Germans needed much charcoal; whatever we produced was too little. For months on end our nourishment consisted of partly rotten turnips and cabbage. "Perhaps it can't be otherwise," we said. "The pressure of the Germans is too severe. But the French have granted us the privilege of asylum; we hold written proof of it in our hands. Never will they hand us over to the Germans, even if the Germans should demand it."

Well, the Vichy government did hand us over, 100,000 Jews, possibly even more, were deported from France to Poland. One cannot say that the French people were enthusiastic about this action. There were many who among friends gave verbal expression to their disapproval. Others helped to hide outcasts or assisted in getting us food. But for the most part, people were passive and the spark of rebellion did not come to life. "We are a poor defeated people, we must wait until we shall be liberated." Most officials of the government clung to their posts, continued to work, and even carried out the orders of the Germans without the slightest attempts at sabotage.

Our labor company was quartered in a barn. One day, at 4 in the morning, it was completely surrounded by police. I was sleeping in a dark corner from which a ladder led upstairs. When I heard voices and saw lights flashing, I snatched my clothing and without hesitation climbed the ladder. Thence to the roof and thence by jumping I reached the branch of a tree. It was dark; I was in the protecting forest.

For seven months I lived in flight, hunted by the police. I hid on out-of-the-way farms; for three weeks I was concealed in a dark barn which I could leave only during the night. Another time I sought refuge in the coal bin of a monastery. At last I found asylum in a hospital whose chief physician was a sincere anti-fascist.

After a time word was received from Nice that the Jews who had escaped to Italian-held territory would be under the protection of the Italian government. It seemed unbelievable. Were the Italians that generous? Could the allies of Germany intend to help the enemies of the nazi régime and save them from deportation? In spite of many doubts I decided to go to Nice. I had nothing to lose. Even though I had successfully escaped the police for seven months, sooner or later they must trap me.

I tried to get false French identification papers. This was not difficult, because in all German occupied territory business transactions involving false papers flourished. In Marseilles German officers inspected the train. But they compared only the snapshot of the identification card with the actual face of the traveler. Without question my documents were returned.

In Nice I reported to Italian headquarters and was from that moment under the protection of the Italian government. No sooner had I left the police station than I was stopped by French police agents in civilian clothing, who demanded my documents.

"My papers are at Italian headquarters," I said, and tried to appear calm. "Come with me!"

"No, you are going with us," said one of the

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agents roughly. My protests were to no avail and I had to follow the two policemen. For 24 hours I again sat in a French prison. It was not the first time. The next day I was released by order of the Italian headquarters which had learned of my imprisonment.

For a few months I lived quietly and peacefully under the protection of the Italians. Then came the day of the armistice. All of a sudden, overnight, the Italians vanished and the never ending columns of Germans marched into Nice. To stay any longer in Nice seemed unwise. It seemed more sensible to make use of the uproar and general confusion in Italy. I decided to try to reach Rome, where the allied armies were expected in a short time.

I crossed the Col di Finestra with three comrades. On the top of the mountain was an Italian fort. As we approached the summit, Italian soldiers came rushing down toward us. Frightened we threw away our knapsacks and began to run. "Siamo amici!" they shouted, and they waved us to come back: "Siamo amici!" *We are friends!* They had dashed out only to help us mount the last steep edge of the Col di Finestra and to assist us with our luggage. Yes, these were the Italians.

Everything was upside down in Italy. The army was on the point of being dissolved and everywhere the forces of the Germans could be seen. Fortunately we were forgotten in the general confusion. The first days we kept on marching. When we were tired and hungry we entered the nearest farmhouse. In the beginning we did not dare to identify ourselves but we quickly learned the magic of the words *Siamo ebrei* . . . we are Jews. . . . It was as in a fairy tale. The unfriendly faces suddenly changed into kind ones, food was brought out of hiding places. The Italian people treated us with moving hospitality. Even though it was strictly forbidden to hide or to give asylum to strangers, never did we encounter difficulties in finding a place to sleep.

After a time we even dared to board the trains. A stationmaster to whom we told our predicament assured us that the Germans did not supervise train travel. In this fashion, via Genoa and Florence, we reached Rome.

For any person with illegal papers it is of utmost importance to have a sort of "free harbor" in a new city, because the dangers in an unknown setting are almost overwhelming for those who are in flight. In Genoa we had been given the address of the Jewish Committee as a possible refuge in Rome. But when we arrived we found the doors locked. We learned that the committee had gone out of existence. None of us could speak Italian properly, none of us had friends or relatives in the city. And wherever we looked we saw German uniforms.

Without hesitation, I turned for help to the first Catholic priest who passed by. (It isn't difficult to find a priest in the streets of Rome). He led us to a monastery and the next morning brought us into contact with the committee, which of course continued to function secretly.

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We were not the first to whom the idea had occurred to wait for the arrival of the Americans in Rome. Hundreds of comrades, who had fled the camps after the armistice, had had the same notion. Daily the number of new arrivals grew. How was it possible to conceal so many people from the Germans?

An underground organization under the leadership of the Capuchin monk Pater Benedetto, worked hand in glove with the Italian police; Signore di Fiori, the head of the foreign section of the police, knew well enough that the French papers which were presented to him were not genuine. (Some members of the organization produced them wholesale in one of the rooms in the Capuchin monastery.) All of them were legalized by the Italian police. We received ration books and permits for residence in Rome. This was to enable us to show legal papers to the Germans who might challenge us in the streets or in our homes. The police had to keep a record on every foreigner. To safeguard the records from falling into German hands they were hidden in the cellar of the Questura.

Trembling one entered police headquarters. "You are French, Catholic, Aryan, aren't you?" said the official before one could open one's mouth and he wrote the permit.

Of course there had been good people in France, patriots, who helped us, otherwise none of the 500 who fled to Italy could have escaped. But nowhere had there been such an open, courageous effort to sabotage the German regulations as we repeatedly experienced in Italy. Only after the successful invasion in North Africa did the French awaken from their lethargy.

The closer the Americans came, the worse things became in Rome. The Germans searched the city for Italians of draft age, of which there were at least 200,000 hidden away who did not want to fight for the Germans. Field gendarmes in green uniforms swarmed everywhere, and without asking any questions, took men away. "Don't go into the street," everyone said, but one had to go. One had to eat, one had to get the three and a half ounces of bread which were our daily ration. How many times did we go in vain to the Ponto Sisto, the center of the black market, before we could buy some food even at a terrific price. Every sally into the streets was an adventure and danger was hidden around every street corner.

Three weeks before the Americans came, we

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received a warning from the police to leave our legal dwellings and to hide ourselves. The Germans had learned that our papers were false.

Eight weeks before, two soldiers in German uniform had come to one of the leaders of our underground organization. "We were forced into the German army," they said. "We are French. Here are our papers. We want to desert. Please help!" The papers were genuine. We have learned during the years of persecution to recognize the genuineness of a paper. They spoke French as only Frenchmen do. We had to help. We gave them civilian clothing, money, false papers. We assisted them to find quarters where they could live without being registered. One fell sick with jaundice and was nursed by one of our wives. And then they betrayed us for money! 5,000 lire for every Jew! 81 people who for years had trembled for their lives, who for years through cleverness and luck had escaped the traps of the Germans, fell into the hands of the Gestapo. And the number would have been higher—perhaps all of us would have been caught —if the Italian police had not warned us in time.

Indescribable was the confusion these two traitors produced among us. They knew all the details of our organization, knew almost all our names, our real names and our assumed ones. But the Italian police did not look on quietly. One day, as they approached the shop in which they bought their daily bread, the two criminals were stopped by two men in civilian clothing. "Papers!" The papers were in order, but the two gentlemen found something wrong and took the Frenchmen away. They were brought to prison under assumed names so that the Germans lost all trace of them. There they were hidden until the Americans came. Later they were delivered for trial to a court-martial of the de Gaulle army.

The grim fate of deportation to Poland came very close to me in the last phase of this desperate struggle for freedom. When the warning of the police reached me I rushed to my friends to tell them to leave their home at once. But before I could explain anything, there was the sound of the door bell. Once—we had our definite signals—two times short . . . then we knew it was a friend. Only once! . . . that seemed dubious. We did not open.

The bell rang again . . . longer, more threatening. Then someone knocked at the door. We had to open. I went to the window and looked out. We were on the fifth floor. What happened then I don't quite remember. Somebody opened the door. An incisive threatening voice: nobody is to leave the apartment! It was one of the Frenchmen who spoke these words. The French traitor! I heard horrified cries and the noise of heavy boots.

Without a moment's hesitation I climbed out of the window and stood on the small cornice of the housefront. It was a modern house with a smooth façade. Deep below me a street-cleaner swept quietly without even looking up. From the window of the house opposite a half dressed woman stared at me. I walked as if entranced. Whither? That I didn't know myself. But to be caught . . . that was out of the question. Rather it was better to fall, to fall five stories would eliminate the fear of being deported to Poland. The cornice sloped so that water could run off. Of course, when the architect designed this house, he could not know that some man fleeing for his life in desperation would try this way.

Now the cornice stopped. On to the next house the ledge was about ten inches lower.

Only ten inches . . . but five stories high . . . and a smooth façade! If I ever go to heaven said the famous architect, Adolf Loos, I will find that the houses there have smooth façades. Of this I thought in that moment, and that I too soon would be in heaven. For a moment I hesitated and seemed to be glued to the unyielding wall. Then I moved one foot, took it back, looked up at the sky and started to pray. . . . "Dear God . . . only ten inches . . . please help me once more!" Then I dared to move. The next ledge was twice as broad. I almost ran to the next balcony, took hold of the iron balustrade, climbed over it and stood in front of a glass door. It was unlocked. A slight pressure of my hand and I was in a room.

An old man was sitting at a writing desk and jumped up terrified when he saw me. Before he could question me I rushed past him, down the stairs and out into the street. And I ran—as never before in my life. . . .

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After the treachery of the Frenchmen we had changed our living quarters. It wasn't easy to find new rooms in a hurry, because all free apartments were occupied by English prisoners of war and young Italians who were trying to escape the German draft. The English prisoners of war had used the days of confusion after the armistice to escape from prison camps.

The Catholic Church never failed to help us in our trouble. She assisted us in finding quarters in the houses of pious Catholics. Single women found refuge in convents. I lived, together with a comrade, with the widow of an Italian general. In the next apartment were two young Italians. On the floor above us lived two English officers. Almost all houses in Rome had such guests. The janitor, who was responsible that nobody living in the house should remain unregistered, knew about us. And the other people in the house knew. Nevertheless the danger was not great

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because the burning hatred for the Germans was stronger than the temptation to get the money offered as a price on our heads.

We only trembled lest the Germans systematically search whole districts. In the Quadrano sector they had begun by taking 5,000 hidden men. But the systematic search was never carried through, they did not have sufficient troops. The Americans were approaching and everyone wearing a German uniform in Rome was ordered to the front. It would not have made sense to entrust the search of the houses to Roman policemen; they would have been blind and deaf and most certainly would not have discovered a single hidden man! But despite this we tried to avoid leaving our homes. But because of my work for the committee I had to leave my protected hiding place more frequently than I liked.

During my entire stay in Rome it was my task to maintain a system of communication with forty families and to see to it that they got their money. It was not advisable to ask these people to meet me in my home—the coming and going would have excited attention. I arranged for a fixed meeting place. Three times a week in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. This beautiful church was crowded with people all day long. One could enter by the front door and leave by the back. The Italians, who more than any other people love to go in and out of churches, used every opportunity for a few minutes of silent worship.

When I was waiting there I was in no way conspicuous and one by one my clients came. (Of course only the heads of families.) Without any words I pressed the ready envelope into their hands and in exchange received a slip of paper with their wishes.

Where the people lived for whom I cared, I did not know and did not want to know. None of us knew where the others were living. This protective measure was used after the betrayal by the French deserters to prevent some unhappy individual from divulging the addresses of his friends under the pain of torture. In the Via Tasso, the Gestapo beat their prisoners till they spoke. The screaming of people thus tortured prevented the people in the neighborhood from sleeping. . . .

Twelve days before the Americans arrived, I was stopped on the street by two fascist policemen, followed by a German. They wanted to see my papers. "Documenti. . . ." Since the Germans knew that French and Hungarians' papers were false, we could not use them any longer. I had Italian papers in my possession. A government official had given them to my friend and myself free of charge. According to the data on these papers, I was an Italian. But my first sentence spoken in Italian would have given me away. I looked at the Italian policeman with tired, uncomprehending eyes, and when he repeated his request I slowly reached into my pocket. He took the paper, checked the snapshot.

"Are you from Naples? Since when have you been in Rome?"

I did not answer at once, held my head in an awkward position, mouth open and lips drooping. And then I stammered "Bom...Bom...Bombardamento...Napoli...Bombardamento. . . ."

My words were accompanied by uncertain trembling gestures. "Residence permit? Where do you live? What are you doing in Rome?"

I did not react to any of these questions. "Bom...Bom...Bombardamento...Napoli. . . ." I repeated it over and over. "Bom...Bombar... Bombardamento. . . ."

In the meantime curious onlookers had gathered around. Words of disapproval could be heard; the police should leave the poor victim of the war alone. But the fascist asked more and more questions and became more and more nervous. I pretended to try hard to answer, struggled with the words but my trembling lips did not bring forth anything but the sad, accusing "Bom...Bombardamento. . . ." Eventually the policeman got tired, and returned my papers. I did not move. I was afraid to turn back. He might change his mind the minute he no longer saw my eyes, which had caused him to feel pity; the eyes of a man broken by fate.

Finally he left . . . finally. . . .

Slowly I turned to the people surrounding me and continued my act "Bom...Bombardamento... Napoli. . . ." Suddenly I felt a hand in my pocket. Another followed. All of a sudden my pockets were filled with money. Tears were running from the eyes of an old woman. "My daughter also died during the bombardment of Naples," she sobbed.

Slowly I went on my way and hid myself in the doorway of a house around the corner. My knees were trembling as if I had actually experienced a bombardment. I found 57 lire in my pocket. I felt like a thief. . . .

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After this experience I did not dare to go into the street. The janitor took pity on us and rushed around to find something for us to eat. Without him we would have starved to death. We sat for twelve days with closed windows and the blinds down. In the apartment next to ours was a radio. For hours we sat pressing our ears to the wall and tried to listen to the news. The newspapers, directed by the fascists, tried to minimize as much as possible the advance of the Allies. New successes of the Americans was reported only many days later. Frosinone taken! Fighting around Veletri! The liberators were coming closer and closer. The thunder of the guns became louder,

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the encirclement tighter. And our tension grew.

We lived in a street running into the Via Casilina. During the nights the tanks, convoys of trucks carring ammunition, troops, passed right under our window toward the German front. Friday night, however, the picture changed. An endless stream of German cars fully loaded were driving in the opposite direction. On Saturday night, the chain of cars, tanks and vehicles drawn by horses never stopped.

Sunday morning the Germans began to dynamite all the important military buildings and the explosions continued all day. At seven o'clock at night German parachute troops took possession of the street crossings, and shot into windows if they were not closed. After some time the parachutists left the street crossings, running rather than walking. They were followed by a car which had a huge swastika, draped across the radiator. The "swastika" left Rome.

Then quiet. The streets were empty. No more Germans could be seen. We stood close to the windows, trying to look out. But neither we nor the people in the houses opposite dared to open the windows. About 9 o'clock all of a sudden, we heard shouts, screams. "Arrivati! . . . Arrivati!" They have arrived! The Americans are here!

The windows flew open and the people crazed with happiness screamed, laughed, embraced. Everybody rushed out of the house. In no time the streets were crowded with people. In the hallway my friend and I and the two English officers were embraced by the other inhabitants of the house. They kissed us and carried us on their shoulders. We could hardly breathe.

We walked or rather rushed to the Via Nazionale. We had to see the Americans, otherwise we could not believe that we were really liberated. Flags, flags everywhere. Also American and English flags. And the street so full one could hardly pass.

Near the Piazza Esedra we met a car which tried slowly to make its way through the crowd. Nothing could hold me back. I jumped on the car and kissed the first American soldier. He was Private Harold J. Mack from Pennsburg. Understandingly enough, he was very tired and badly shaved.

What happened in Rome after the arrival of the Americans, war reporters have since told. The whole city was mad with joy. And we, who were saved—I think during all the years of persecutions we did not cry as much as on this one day. But this time the tears were tears of joy. For hours and hours I stood in the Via Regina Margherita and watched the columns of the Allies march by. Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Poles, New Zealanders, Australians, Moroccans, Italians . . . tanks, great guns, convoys of trucks carrying ammunition, material for bridges, on and on. . . . For hours, for days the flow never stopped. But the noise of the tanks, of cars and guns which kept me from sleep, because I lived in this street, was music for my ears.

The soldiers in passing threw cigarettes, chocolate, candy to the starving population. I did not attempt to get any. I gazed at the suntanned men in khaki uniforms, the crews of the passing trucks.

In all the Roman churches people were praying, and the large synagogue was reopened with a solemn thanksgiving service. It was a ceremony of joy. The place of honor was occupied by the Capuchin monk Pater Benedetto, the leader of the underground committee.

And when the Rabbi, a member of the English army and in uniform, deeply moved, thanked the Catholic Church for all she had done in the deepest fulfillment of the command "love thy neighbor" and when he, while saying this, pointed to Pater Benedetto, the silence of the House of God was broken by a storm of applause which threatened never to cease. And perhaps for the first time since the creation of the world it happened that the walls of a Jewish house of prayer trembled with applause to honor a Catholic priest.

Lines at a Park

We must be staged, we city-bred, whose gothic
habit demands décor; we are apt at impinging
the cutthroat comment of spire and cone, yet our lithic
idiom can be tender; for example, the unhinging
charm of this sudden naïve
ripple among the canyons of demure little paths under
flickering leaves.

In our fashion, we dramatize all days in their fitting
dream; and my heart, that reaches now as with arms
to enfold this afternoon idyl in its shimmer-setting,
will forever define peace on earth in these terms:
remembering how the mild scene
opened out so gently on a tapestry-drop of tossing green;

discovered broad allegorical steps in a slow
sunlit climb through groves with a feathery shade
on underleaves, while the innocent to-and-fro
of playground flashed, and when the vague eye strayed
even the farther sketch
of horizon in parochial jumble seemed thumb-worn, shaped
for touch;

how everywhere overrunnings and lingerings of smile
dappled with salutation the paths, the musing
benches and invaded lawns with their small
token scallops of fence; and soft, self-loosing
indulgences rose and outflowed
mingling, connoting without strain the possible nature
of God.

MARY FOXWORTHY.

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A Matériel Reserve

What to do with surplus war supplies

R. H. Monk

THE IDEA is becoming accepted that the normal sequel to a diplomatic note of protest in the postwar days will be a summoning of naval might and the landing of troops in the offending country. The idea is being accepted that peace must be maintained by force, even if you call that force an international police organization.

Yet the end of the war will mark a high point in depletion of national resources and a maximum straining of national finance. Public opinion and the financial stability of the nation will probably demand a great reduction in military budgets. At the same time, the security of the nation and our part in enforcing the peace will continue to demand the highly complex and expensive equipment used in modern warfare. At least careful planning will be required to be prepared for the typical, modern "total" war on a limited budget.

One of the lessons generally learned from the early phases of World War II is that obsolete equipment is even worse than equipment in inadequate quantity, in that it encourages false confidence on the part of the civilian and no confidence on the part of the fighting man. Because sweet victory is now within our grasp, we cannot forget that all of the defeats, setbacks and loss of territory suffered by the Allied Nations in the early part of this war were attributed to lack of matériel. The efficiency of the regulars in our Army and Navy has never been questioned, and it has been assumed they could have waged, at least, a successful defense from the outset, except for the lack of the proper quantity and quality of matériel.

That we shall have an unprecedented quantity of armament on hand at the end of the war cannot be taken to mean that we are secure in it for very long—because we now know that even quantity is not enough. Military vigilance and preparedness in the future must include an increased research and a keeping of the next war "on the drawing boards" at all times.

It would be no innovation for our military planners to maintain surveys of the nation's industrial facilities. Nor would it be a new policy for the military services to foster research in their own and other laboratories. But the speed of attack possible in modern warfare will demand more in the future. It will demand a store of the *most modern goods of war*—for an emergency—plus quick war production from the factories.

The Surplus Property Act of 1944 established a Surplus Property Board of three members in the Office of War Mobilization. It charged this board with the administration of the sale of all surplus war properties through "disposal agencies"—which can be any other government agency. The Board sets the prices and the rules for the sale. Each "owning agency" of the government (Army, Navy, RFC, DPC, etc.) declares its own surplus and the board then undertakes the sale. Under the act an attempt is first made to have some other government agency use the surplus. If that is not possible, priority of sale is given to states, local governments, tax-supported and non-profit institutions. If these do not want the surplus materials, further preference is given to veterans, farmers, farmers co-ops, and small business (by offering it in small lots). If nobody wants the surplus, destruction is authorized, but only after thirty days' public notice thereof, so as to give any potential buyers an opportunity to act.

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The authority for the disposal board terminates three years after the "cessation of hostilities," and apparently all disposal is to be accomplished by that time. The accent is on disposal of course; get rid of it. In fact one of the strangest provisions of the Act is that the board may suspend all the provisions of the Act (that is preferential use by other government agencies, preferential sale to states, municipalities, veterans, farmers, etc.) in order to get rid of surplus property which is abroad, when it is declared surplus. The act specifically prohibits reimportation to the United States of surplus properties that have been sold abroad. So it looks as if a lot of people won't be able to buy "that jeep" after the war.

This provision for foreign sale is apparently intended to relieve the Army and Navy of returning matériel from combat theaters. It could provide the ridiculous situation of having us sell our slightly used machinery of war to German and Japanese buyers, for that is where most of this matériel will end up. The only merit of these provisions is apparently consistency—we will end the

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war as we began it, by selling scrap to the Japanese.

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Matériel generally and armament particularly should be kept tooled and ready for mass production. Standard machine tools and special machine tools, dies, molds, jigs, and factories to make any given item must be kept available. The factories and plants that have helped to win this war might be organized into an industrial military reserve. The organization of such an industrial reserve would apply particularly in the engineering, production planning and tool departments of these companies. Engineering developments and research will demand changes or scrapping of particular plans and tools from time to time. This would be regarded as a normal operation in matériel preparedness.

While all of this perpetual planning and tooling-up could be done in one government organization set up for that purpose, there would be obvious advantages in keeping it decentralized and close to the actual sources of war production. One of these advantages is the education of our industrialists in the defense needs of the country. We cannot afford to forget the belated and painful conversion of our immense automobile industry to defense work. Not the least important advantage is enlisting the stimulus of competition in research and in the improvement of production methods. It will be absolutely necessary to accommodate our economy so that it may compete with any totalitarian economy in war—and of course to maintain all that is essential to our democracy at the same time. Careful legislation can meet these conditions. Industrialists could be expected to participate in such a program from patriotic motives just as individuals used to belong to the national guard and the naval reserve, and as they will probably be expected to do again.

Besides the blueprints, the tools, and the factories, it will be necessary to have available bulk or semi-finished materials. One of the most unnecessary bottlenecks early in this war was the scarcity of metals in a nation rich in them. Even if there had been compulsory military training since the last war, it seems doubtful that our offensives would have been possible any sooner, because it took time (nearly two years) to build up the necessary quantity and quality of matériel for major offensives. The stockpiling legislation of June 7, 1939, and that contained in the Surplus Property Act of 1944 only provided for "critical and strategic materials"—for the most part materials that we cannot produce in sufficient quantity in our country. It made no provision whatsoever for the inadequacy of our own industry and natural resources in an emergency. Our opportunity to obtain a permanent reserve of bulk materials is afforded by the demobilization after this war.

Successful maintenance of a national stockpile of bulk materials would depend on several factors, the most readily apparent of which are:

First: The stockpile must be kept balanced with a view to current military needs. It would include bulk materials and semi-finished materials. Examples of the former are pigged iron, copper, tin, nickel, aluminum, magnesium, lead, zinc, and the rare alloying metals, as well as minerals like mica and the stable chemicals. Examples of the semi-finished materials would be metal shapes, plate, sheet and extrusions, standard screws, nuts, bolts, rivets, valves, roller bearings, wire, optical glass, and army-navy standard fittings used in aircraft. Very few of all of the materials in a modern war machine are included in the existing legislation on stockpiling, and there is no long term or permanent, planned provisions for stockpiling.

Second: Adequate storage must be provided. The space is already available in government-owned plants, reservations and arsenals. Government property which cannot be effectively turned to civilian use could thus be kept at work. Specifications would be drawn for the proper storage of each item; there must be reasonable assurance that the materials will be in good condition when the time comes to use them. The raw materials must be of a quality ready and suitable for immediate processing. For example, pig aluminum must be of the various specified alloys for aircraft forgings in the current models. The best scientific advice must be utilized to prevent deterioration of the stored material.

Third: The inventory of the stockpile must reflect current military needs. This would require intelligent administration by military personnel and a rapid, accurate, perpetual inventory. The latter condition could easily be met by mechanical methods. The former might require a further specialization of the supply personnel in the military services, a specialization which seems desirable, in any event, in order the better to link the civilian productive economy to a total war machine. If we have a combined department of defense instead of separate departments of the Army and Navy after the war (as recommended for serious consideration by Mr. Byrnes in his last report as "Assistant President") this would of course become a function of that department and might even be taken over by civilians working closely with army and navy heads.

Fourth: The stockpile should be spread over the country with a view to storing certain materials near to the industrial areas where they would eventually be used. It might be wise to attempt complete regional units, each of which could turn out a complete war machine, even if

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the other sections of the country were knocked out of production.

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From all of this comes a principle—that government investments in material should be designed for both war and peace just as government subsidy of American shipping has been. Let the American industrial genius somehow convert the aircraft factories to prefabricated housing factories, the TNT plants to fertilizer plants, the synthetic rubber factories to plastics factories, and the shipyards to railway car and bridge plants —and all of them back again to their original purpose if need be.

With the cancelation of war contracts and the liquidation of their physical assets, the government is beginning to dispose of an estimated sixty to one hundred billion dollars worth of surplus war matériel. It will all fall into two classes: matériel which can be used in the civilian economy and that which cannot.

The disposal agency must get rid of all matériel that is in excess, all that will deteriorate before probable use, and all goods that can be obsolete for future warfare. Of course goods that can be used by civilians can be disposed of at an advantage (unless they are sold to Germans and Japanese). The remainder and the greatest part of it is junk in the civilian economy. The only other possible disposal of the non-civilian goods would be sales to small governments (to use on their own people—one does not use obsolete equipment except on peasants and the like) and to revolutionists by what were called "international arms bootleggers" in prewar days. Congressional investigations were much concerned with this international armament trade after the last war.

Why should not all of these non-civilian goods be scrapped under government contract and turned into pig or semi-processed goods to be stored in a national stockpile? Why should not all non-civilian goods be returned to this country to be melted into a national stockpile?

There are a number of reasons closely tied in with our country's well-being favoring maintenance of a bulk materials reserve. Some of these reasons are compelling at the present time and others of them would not show advantage until some future emergency when we are confronted with war:

First: Such a reserve would tend to stabilize the economic pendulum by bringing wartime production peaks closer to peacetime production lows. It would ease the transition from war to peace and from peace to war, a consummation devoutly wished for by all economists.

Second: The economic danger of dumping large quantities of basic materials in civilian markets after this war will be avoided. Production and employment in the basic metal and mining industries (the heavy industries) will be maintained at a high level to supply a large civilian backlog. Stabilization of production in the heavy industries is what economists dream of.

Third: Preparation of a matériel reserve would keep a number of people usefully employed at the end of the war in processing, classifying, and stowing the goods until civilian production and employment can be brought to its normal condition. It would ease the employment problem during the postwar conversion period.

Fourth: The policy is in keeping with the conservation of natural resources, about which Americans (and especially our military leaders) are increasingly concerned.

Fifth: Matériel preparedness would tend to prevent the unwarranted agitation of special interests (such as aircraft and armament manufacturers) for future wars by taking away the quick-profit incentive and the prospect of premium fees for "can do" and speedy production. It places the initiative for war contracts in government hands, where it belongs, without eliminating the stimulus of competition.

Sixth: A reserve of bulk materials would provide a cushion against the impact of strikes in the heavy industries in war time. Fabricators could proceed with their contracts even if the mills were struck by drawing on the national stockpile, or what was left of it. The right to strike would not have to be forfeited in war time. If there had been a large stockpile of coal built up along the railroads during the days of the depression, we probably would never have heard from John L. Lewis.

Seventh: The policy would release more men for military service in war time by making them less essential in the heavy industries, where they are most difficult to replace with women. Matériel preparedness would in general ease the manpower problem in war time.

Eighth: Retention of the instruments of war by our government would prevent their sale by private interests to other powers and to groups ambitious for power. It would likewise prevent the sale of scrap to potential enemies, although only special legislation could prevent export of other scrap by private interests.

Ninth: The plan would provide an opportunity to convert the present militaristic enemies' war machines, brought back from the battle sites, into our national reserve stockpile.

Our government has long been interested in acquiring military oil reserves. The political turbulence that has been incidental to the search for them does not alter the desirability of obtaining them. In peace time there was always military study and concern over natural resources and pro-

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duction facilities, but it was not until this war that the matériel problem assumed such a dominant rôle. This was our first experience with total war.

What of the cost of such a program? The best answer to that question seems to be another: What of the cost of not having it? But the value of a great part of surplus war goods in its present form is nothing in the civilian economy. In any form it would flood and swamp any market, producing stagnation, unemployment, etc. Its value even as scrap will be immediately reduced once it begins to flood the open market, for then the price will tumble. Under existing legislation, the cost of wages to process the scrap would otherwise be paid out to veterans as unemployment insurance. The federal stockpile itself would be a national asset which would give us added credit and financial stability at home and abroad.

The major residue of the cost for a complete program of matériel preparedness would be some form of subsidy to business, industrial and engineering organizations, in payment for providing up-to-date plans and tools for war production. It should be a cost only proportionate to the pay of national guardsmen and military reserves on inactive duty. Then if military leaders were convinced that quick war production were possible, they could be satisfied with a smaller quantity of finished goods-on-hand at any one time.

If our demobilization policies contribute to the nation's prosperity the American people will be more able and more willing to afford the security of a properly equipped army and navy. If the nation's plan of preparedness follows a definite, methodical, clear-cut pattern all Americans would more willingly participate in it.

It is certainly more democratic to "conscript" corporate property in peace time than it is to conscript individuals. Personal and individual liberty is much more essential to the American way than the liberty of established investment capital (as distinguished from private property or risk capital). It is good for us that these total wars have come to be principally wars of matériel.

We were always referred to as the "arsenal of democracy" even before we got into the war. Apparently our allies could do without our manpower if they had to, but they could not do without the matériel of war which we provided. If modern wars were not principally wars of matériel we might be in danger of losing our freedom. The only way to be victorious in a war on any totalitarian nation is to wage total war—to suspend the democratic process—as we have done. To *prepare* for total war nowadays we may find it necessary to make the producers of matériel "cooperate" with the government very closely, in order to save "personnel" from too close cooperation.

Communications

WORKERS EDUCATION

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editors: Thank you very much for the copy of the education number of THE COMMONWEAL (April 6). I read with great interest Anne Ramsay's article on "Workers Education." While reading the article I found myself nodding my head in "that's so" fashion at almost every paragraph.

In her concluding sentence Miss Ramsay declares, "If workers' education wants to move ahead, it will do well to set aside romantic and extravagant dreams and concentrate on the practical job at hand." I am not yet so old and disillusioned that I would insist that the most romantical and extravagant dream is to hope for considerable success in dealing with the practical job, even with concentration. In the sense that Miss Ramsay speaks, I often wonder whether effective workers' education must not necessarily begin with adequate labor education in the periods well before adult life.

This view, you may well understand, has not been weakened at all by my own contact with the effectiveness and quality of Catholic teaching as a pupil in the Convent of our Sisters of Mercy at Merion, Pennsylvania.

With best wishes for the continued success of THE COMMONWEAL.

DAVID S. SCHICK,
Educational Director,
Upholsterers' International Union, AFL.

UNITED EUROPE AND UTOPIA

Stanford University, Calif.

TO the Editors: I wish to thank Mr. Rouček for a courteous and sympathetic review of "Europe Free and United." He is manifestly afraid of Utopianism and wishful thinking. If Yalta be "realism," give us anything else.

I should like to ask Mr. Rouček—and your readers—whether the following propositions are Utopian or realistic.

(a) I want to put the train back on the track, now that the wrecker, Hitler, is disposed of. The Locarno spirit led Briand to a formal proposal for European federation. That was the way of sanity in 1929. It still is. The ideal that was defeated in 1945 was Hitler's, not Briand's.

(b) We cannot simply declare that Germany has ceased to exist. There are still from 70 to 80,000,000 Germans in the center of Europe. The continent will have to unite in order to watch these Germans, to prevent their rearming, to gear their industry to "the common weal" of Europe. (Where there is a common weal, there should be a Commonwealth.) Non-Germans and Germans are thus forced into the closest partnership. On unequal terms, no doubt, until the German mind is reconstructed; but with liberty and equality as the goal of every democrat and of every Christian.

(c) Wendell Willkie and innumerable others have stated that a European Zollverein is a necessity. But

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there can be no economic union without a common social policy, and therefore without a government.

(d) Roosevelt, Churchill, Hoover—and Admiral Doenitz—realists all, of various stripes—agree about the existence of a "European Family," now disrupted, and the need of a "European Council." "Ah! But only in the dim tomorrow," say the wise. Are they wise? Shall we painfully rebuild the spite fences, Chinese walls, Maginot Lines of yesterday, now shattered, in the hope that we may pull them down later on?

It would be Utopian to imagine that the magic formula *European Union* will dispose of all difficulties. It is difficult to run a business, an army, a democratic state, a socialist state; but it is not Utopian. It is difficult to be a Christian: is it Utopian? It is difficult to keep alive; but it is "realistic."

ALBERT GUERARD.

The Stage & Screen

Foxhole in the Parlor

THE *Return of the Soldier* is the theme Elsa Shelley is currently concerned with, but I cannot say her play builds from journalism into theater. Having endured a fair gamut of atrocious and mechanical warfare on the European fronts a young Musician is discharged from an army hospital, still critically spiritually wounded, and determined to solve the peace, dissolve the war forever. Two sympathetic young neighbors; an appealing young girl; a brutal unenlightened sister; and finally, an ex-senator headed for the San Francisco Conference, all contribute to and subsequently decipher the boy's play, although his problem is naturally left hanging in the air on both sides of the foots. That Almighty God should be given a chair at the peace table, and that from henceforth, everywhere, all wars should be established as civil ones, are two of this soldier's plainest conclusions. In terms of motive, I think his author is clear and direct; in terms of craft, she is considerably less sure. To begin with, although Miss Shelley has set her piece presumably anywhere in America (my guess would be a Greenwich Village Mews in this town) her people are all adult, mainly creative workers, and their emergent psychological naïveté does not seem to me credible, although indeed, this circumstance is the chief motivation of the play. While there are undoubtedly corners of the country where the work of Freud is unknown, one would say it could only be rejected, not ignored, by a group of urban sophisticates. Again, having devised a complex double stage-picture to support her action (how "The Voice of the Turtle" resounds on the street!) Miss Shelley has necessarily hampered the realism of her piece by a good bit of clumsy physical mechanism, and her difficulties here are in no way lightened by her designer and director—Lee Simonson and John Haggott. One is confronted first by what seems to be a true-to-life-somewhere setting, only to have it turn into a true-to-John van Druten device, amounting to a long distraction to the audience, and an expensive borrowing to the author. There are further weaknesses of organization (scenes are constantly repeated; every other minute, everyone has another meal) but I can see small point in detailing them, it is fairest to the author to call the business successless from the start. While I think there is neither justice nor intelligence in the critical daily opinion that Miss Shelley has proved herself a "theatrical opportunist" in her attack on our most immediate universal problem, I do think it is necessary to record that she has neither thought nor wrought sufficiently for the job. By way of performance, Montgomery Clift turns in a neat (repeat) Soldier; Flora Campbell moves skillfully among the trappings, but is vocally somewhat exclamatory; Ann Lincoln projects an assured ingénue; the rest are in line. (*At the Booth.*)

Memphis Bound

FIRST of two fandangos based upon "Pinafore"—the second is due next week—this John Wildberg production must go down immediately, I think, as the wildest, wittiest musical on view. I wish it were perfect. An uproarious book, plotted by Albert Barker and Sally Benson, gives us Bill Robinson and Avon Long, plus a troupe of most talented Negro players, rushing in and out of jail and up and down a collapsed showboat, putting on Gilbert and Sullivan, and (with finesse) taking them off. To the old, and some new, tunes. The thing scatters badly in its second portion, and I do utterly regret the authors' failure to pursue their mad dream scene (this is a nightmare version of "Trial by Jury"!) to its satirical conclusion. Perhaps if a little of the wonderful dancing of the wonderful Bill Robinson could have been cut, there might have been time to box the book completely and not to have allowed it to descend into a series of vaudeville turns. However, if you care for words and music, they are here beautifully arranged and weighted by Don Walker and Clay Warnick; no single possibility for parody is ignored, and the completely original numbers measure up fairly to the master pieces. I thought a number called "Love or Reason" not only the highspot of this show, but of the season. Together with Mr. Robinson, there are Avon Long—perhaps a little emphatically grotesque at moments; Ada Brown—a BIG Buttercup; Thelma Carpenter—the neatest of three Josephines; a great lot of very funny people; and one shy small boy who steps out with enchanting grace. George Jenkins's Village Square setting is his best, so far. (*At the Broadway.*)

Blue Holiday

A POSTPONEMENT of dates resulted in my being able to see only half of this Negro vaudeville offering, and therefore I do not think it entirely fair to attempt to write it up or down accurately. Rumor has it that the show is constantly being improved. For the record, the notable headliners are Ethel Waters, Josh White, Mary Lou Williams and the Katherine Dunham Dancers. (*At the Belasco.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

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The Lampoon in the Window

MOVIES have taken to kidding themselves and each other a lot lately. One wouldn't exactly call this a trend, but it certainly is another indication of cinema's coming of age. The animated cartoons are up to all kinds of tricks; their characters run right off the screen, talk to the audience or even carry signs that comment on the plot like "Silly, ain't it?" And the feature films have been indulging in pranks of their own. In one film, a camel suddenly speaks up and seems to have the voice of Katherine Hepburn. In another, Bing Crosby, who is not listed in the cast at all, appears unexpectedly in the finale and steals the heroine from Bob Hope. In still another, two soldiers are viewing the gorgeous Goldwyn girls who are sunning themselves on the deck of an army transport. "The last war was never like this," says the sergeant; and the private replies, "No, and neither is this one." Such spoofing of the movies by the movies is fun and very likely registers a healthy state of affairs. Unfortunately it also gives the impression that Hollywood is one great big happy family; although everyone, from your grandmother down, knows it isn't. The greatest danger of this business of films poking fun at themselves is that their makers grow lazy and depend too much on the pun or quip, and adult audiences are likely to get tired of the whole thing, especially if the actors step out of character too often. Reviewed briefly here are some forthcoming films that belong to this spoofing or movie-eat-movie school.

"Where Do We Go From Here?" not only kids all other musical movies but also gets in some good digs at grand and light opera as well as the whole field of fantasy. One of the leading points in favor of its witty script (written by Morrie Ryskind from a story by himself and Sig Herzig) is that it never makes any attempt to explain its fantastic plot. True, our hero gets hit on the head by a battery of pots and pans in an early scene, but you never see him wake up from a dream; and for all you know, all this jumping around through the centuries really happened. Bill felt pretty bad on the day the army and navy turned him down, so he went to Lucilla, his girl who was the belle of the USO, but she had an eye only for uniforms. However, Sally, who didn't interest him, saw Bill as more than a 4F civilian. Later when Bill was consoling his sorrows in the scrap metal depot and rubbing an old lamp, out jumped a genie who granted four wishes. No sooner does Bill wish to be in the army, but he finds himself in the army—Washington's in 1776. Later to save himself from a Hessian firing squad, Bill wishes to be in the navy—and so he is, in the midst of a mutiny on the *Santa Maria* in 1492. This scene, done in an operatic manner, becomes a delightful travesty when Bill quells the mutiny by singing about the future wonders of the America they are soon to discover. He can't convince Columbus and the boys, however, not to stop at Cuba, so he goes on to New York alone. In the wilderness, which he knows as Manhattan by a sign indicating Times Square, Bill gets caught by some Indians in the badger game and buys the island for $24. Later he sells to the wily Dutch who do him out of all his profits as well as his pants. But Ali, Bill's genie friend who always turns up at the right time, transports Bill and his Dutch girl friend, who is really Sally, on a wonderful ride through the centuries. The ending to all this is as madcap as the whole story. Gregory Ratoff has directed this technicolor fantasy with imagination and a full sense of fun. Unfortunately some of the big musical sequences are as heavy handed as the typical production numbers they hope to satirize, but most of the music (composed by Kurt Weill) and the gay lyrics (by Ira Gershwin) are in keeping with the fanciful tale. Although Fred MacMurray as the hero doesn't look the 4F type, he sings his songs well and plays the rôle with a casual acceptance of its anachronisms and a belief in magic that adds to its conviction. Joan Leslie makes a charming Sally and June Haver is appropriately seductive as Lucilla; both turn up in various costumes through the ages. It is Gene Sheldon as the genie who will steal your heart with his irresponsible pixie quality. I suppose if you believed in "The Connecticut Yankee" you can believe in this incredible saga of Bill. In any case you can have fun laughing over it.

No doubt it is fitting that Gary Cooper, who has played the lean, wiry, tough cowboy in many a movie, should lampoon this character in the first film to be made under Cooper's own production. *"Along Came Jones"* is a hilarious parody on the typical western. It opens with a fast and exciting stage coach robbery. Its locale and time are the vague southwest in the vague nineties that we've seen so often in so many vague Westerns. Comes the hero, singing of course, and riding along with his pal (played by William Demarest with a delightful sense of fun-poking at all the cowboy heroes' pals). But the outstanding irregularity in this film is that Melody Jones (Cooper) can't use a gun and is not really a typical tough western hero at all. He is a mild, gentle cowboy with a love for adventure and canned tomatoes. He gets awfully involved in things when he is mistaken for the dangerous outlaw (played by my favorite sneering villain: Dan Duryea) who is being chased by the sheriff, a posse, the US marshal, the express company and various vengeful pursuers. The villain's girl (Loretta Young) furthers the deception and thereby hopes to help the wounded outlaw to escape. Romantic Jones, much against his saddle pal's advice, comes to the pretty girl's assistance. Nunnally Johnson has written an amusing screenplay around this situation. I'm afraid, however, it will appeal mainly to sophisticated audiences. Stuart Heisler's direction is a bit slow and at times very talky. Most of the talk is fun, but addicts of western films are likely to wonder when the shooting's going to start. There is a terrific shooting scene finally, so violent in fact that Melody Jones is almost done in before the girl comes to *his* rescue. With "Along Came Jones," Gary Cooper has made an auspicious and intelligent beginning for his newly formed organization. The film won't win the bobby sockers, but knowing audiences will feel well repaid. The perplexed expression on Cooper's face, in one scene when he draws his pistol and yanks out his shirt tale with it, is alone worth the price of admission.

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More to the liking of the bobby sock audience is a picture like *"Out of This World."* It is a musical affair about a girl orchestra leader (Diana Lynn) who finds herself in a jam because she sold too many shares in her male singer (Eddie Bracken) in order to get money for her own band. The ethics of this piece, one might say, are not strictly honorable. And the conniving is further complicated by a scheming secretary (Veronica Lake) who hires an audience to swoon, go into ecstasies and misbehave like bobby sockers whenever Bracken sings. The weak plot is held up from time to time by big, oversized production numbers that are good enough in themselves (like the one in which five pianists play tribute to Miss Lynn) but add nothing to the film as cinema. Admirers of Cass Daley and her brand of roughneck entertainment will get their fill. The film's one asset (besides its satire on swooners and their audiences) that puts it in a class by itself is a clever trick which should appeal even to adults. Shy Eddie Bracken steps up to the microphone to sing, and out of his mouth comes the voice of Bing Crosby!

I really can't decide on whom is the joke in *"Thrill of a Romance."* I guess it's on the audience. Surely this picture cannot be taken seriously by anyone—and yet it takes itself seriously. Under the production of Joe Pasternak (who gave us most of those charming Deanna Durbin movies) and the direction of Richard Thorpe, in beautiful technicolor, it tells the absurd story of a girl whose husband is called to Washington on the first day of their honeymoon; so she pals around and falls in love with an army flier. Since the girl is played by Esther Williams, and the flier by that bobby-sock idol, Van Johnson, there are endless scenes in which Esther teaches Van to swim. These are pretty and tiresome. The film might have some appeal to adults because of the appearance of Lauritz Melchior who sings exceedingly well but is never certain how he fits into the plot. Most of this occurs in an attractive resort in California's mountains, where Melchior has gone to diet. He could have eaten his carrots and sung at home. Youngsters in the audience will be further thrilled by the playing of Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra. But even they won't believe the contrived ending to the silly story when it turns out that Esther isn't legally married to her husband (who is well established as a stuffed shirt) because he isn't yet legally divorced from his last wife. "Thrill of a Romance" is not a satire on movies, but if it had been carried one step farther, it would have become a parody on itself. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

READER'S COMPANION. *Edited by Louis Kronenberger. Viking.* $2.00.
THE TOWNSMAN. *John Sedges. John Day.* $2.75.
MERCHANT OF ALPHABETS. *Reginald Orcutt. Doubleday.* $3.00.
77 WILLOW ROAD. *Helen Douglas Irvine. Doubleday.* $2.00.

Freedom to Choose

LOUIS KRONENBERGER has written a very pleasant introduction to his anthology of verse and prose: ". . . the real impulse behind this book was a desire to please myself. Hence nothing here has either bored or bullied me. There was never any thought that this book should be 'representative' or 'well rounded,' or that it need be fair to established names and reputations." He continues then to explain how he chose what and why.

Well, then, there is no excuse for arguing about what he chose. His introduction, showing such good taste, gives him the right to suggest that we read what has pleased him. There is no possible justification for a display of one's own taste. A display, a parade, of one's own remarkable taste in reading and its wide extent, its universal extent, simply is not called for when the compiler announces that he is pleasing himself. It has always seemed to us that anyway there was something particularly absurd in looking through the index of titles in an anthology and then reviewing the anthology by producing a little index of one's own. A lazy way of reviewing and pretentious. In this book for instance there is a long passage from Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi" which is extraordinarily interesting with its wonderfully precise technicalities about the art of piloting a steamboat on the great river. Would it not be slightly absurd if one felt obliged to inform the reader that Mark Twain wrote other books and that the reviewer knows their names and would not Mr. Kronenberger have been better advised had he given us something from "Huckleberry Finn"? Or again there are fascinating extracts from Boswell. Would it be absolutely useful to demonstrate that one has a Boswell on the bookshelf and knows how to read? There is Tolstoy's "Death of Ivan Ilych," Flaubert's "A Simple Heart," James's "The Pupil." Is it necessary to say that there are other Russians, French, Americans?

There is quite a good deal of poetry serious and light, a remarkable section containing letters by Lady Mary Montagu, Horace Walpole and Lord Byron — and it would be another mistake for the reviewer to go on forever listing what is in this book. This anthology is one of the Viking Portable Library series. It has 731 pages and it really does fit in a pocket.

Hard Lines

FEW THEMES are more familiar than that of the immigrant making his way in America. The story of rags to riches or power or renown—or all three—has been told so many times with slight variations as to personnel and locale as to constitute by now rather dreary reading. Still it is a topic that is sure-fire, and year after year the publishers in this country continue to cash in on it. Only rarely does a novel on immigration have the quality or the sensitiveness of "Giants of the Earth." Yet despite its well-worn theme "The Townsman" manages to compel and hold attention. John Sedges tells the simple story of an English family well and there are several elements which set off this volume from most of its contemporaries.

For one thing Jonathan Goodliffe, the story's central figure, more than lives up to his name. He is also dead serious. He is devoted to his mother to an extent which makes his father jealous; he himself is prey to terrible jealousy. Jonathan consistently takes on more than his share of the family responsibilities. He is so bent on teaching school that the opportunities for making a fortune in pioneer Kansas mean nothing to him. To building up the Median, Kansas, village school he gives the best years of his life.

Thwarted in love and betrayed by his best friend,

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Jonathan is primarily interested in the development of his local community. So much so that he strains every sinew to thwart his best friend's efforts to make Median a wide-open cattle town. No string of saloons, no brothels, no cheap shows for his beloved Median if he can help it. Better remain a settlement of a few sod huts than develop to such a city. And for many years indeed Median amounted to very little; Jonathan hung on.

The publishers say that "John Sedges" is a pseudonym; it would not be surprising if the author were a woman. Jonathan the virtuous is good in the way women would like to see men good. And fate deals with him unkindly. The pall which his unrequited love holds over him is quite as somber as any in Thomas Hardy. "The Townsman" is, however, even more Dickensian in tone: vivid, appealing or repelling one-dimensional characters such as his prettified beloved, his rowdy father and his patient wife combine with sentiments inspired by virtue unrewarded, strong pity and a certain sense of a good job done. At one time or another we have all known admirable people like Jonathan Goodliffe. Fair fortune passes them by but the world is better on their account.

The World That Was

REGINALD ORCUTT, son of the head of the University Press in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has devoted the better part of his life to traveling all over the globe in the interests of the Mergenthaler Linotype Company and its many affiliates. He writes with a great deal of charm and he is possessed not only of a keen sense of humor but of real feeling for people. Hence his account of his travels, "Merchant of Alphabets," is as pleasant a book as you would like to read on a hot summer's evening. Most of Mr. Orcutt's travels, naturally enough, were in Europe, though by no means all. He journeyed to Teheran in the days when a trip there was a genuine adventure. He was negotiating with potential Russian customers back in the early days of the Revolution. And for his own pleasure he went on two expeditions to Greenland.

To a person who likes it, such a life is ideal, and one may hope that in the future—if only for Mr. Orcutt's sake—such a life will once more be possible. It involves, of course, being able to accommodate yourself to very different mentalities, to eating and sleeping conditions which stay-at-homes would find intolerable. The punctiliousness of the Mergenthaler Berlin office was beyond belief. Each day the executives marched out to lunch in strict order of precedence, and sat in the same order at the table reserved for them in a restaurant. The office boys, of course, wore uniforms, and the whole picture, especially during the days of the Weimar Republic, seems fantastic. But the London office was also very British, with work not seriously beginning until afternoon, and then continuing far later than we are used to. Sometimes Mr. Orcutt got shot at—especially in the Balkans—and sometimes he froze. On one occasion he had to go through his hotel diningroom in order to get to the bathroom; the spectacle of a man in a bathrobe threading his way among tables of people eating their suppers is by no means the most incongruous in a delightful book.

Unhappy Family

HELEN DOUGLAS IRVINE has chosen a tortuous means of telling a very sad tale about an English girl of late Victorian days who is wrecked through the meanness of her less well-favored sister. The story of "77 Willow Road" is a good one; it holds the reader's interest and commands his sympathy, but one cannot help wondering whether it would not have been even better had the author chosen a less difficult technique. She has a young Englishwoman who is studying at Cambridge run into a dilapidated old slut in a London park. The old woman obviously had seen better days, but had taken to drink and possessed no attractive features. She gives the young student an address in Cambridge where lodgings may be found. And gradually the story of the heroine is discovered to the student. Were the book written entirely in the first person, as though the student were telling the story she had stumbled upon, the device might seem less unnecessary. But the student does not put the story together; she is forced (probably by the nature of the device) to give us great quantities of it in the form of excerpts not only from such likely documents as diaries and letters but from a long story or narrative supposedly written by one of those who came very closely in contact with the heroine. The whole result seems needlessly cumbersome.

Rose Carey is the daughter of a retired Indian army officer who lives with his wife and children in Cambridge on very narrow means. Major Carey is not only poor, he is utterly insensitive and very nearly brutal in his lack of understanding. Apparently his principal interest in life lies in the whiskey bottle. His elder daughter, Ada, comes as near being a savage animal—and a very clever one—as any character in recent fiction. Under a veneer of middle class righteousness she makes life miserable for everyone. And the mother, Mrs. Carey, is too weak to do anything about it. One of the sons dies because of a beating by the father; the other sons escape the spell of the family. Only Rose and Ada remain, and Ada sees to it that Rose's life is properly spoiled, even going so far as to engineer the death of the man to whom Rose is happily married. In the end Rose, who has become a Catholic, of course turns out to be the old hag whom the narrator had met in the park; at the very end we find her being taken care of by the Little Sisters of the Poor. Rose, of course, is a beautiful character in contrast to all the weakness and deformity which surrounds her, though she herself is not without her own weakness. Why such a rose should blossom in so bleak a desert is a little difficult to understand; but it is always pleasantly moving to *read* about terrible things happening to a nice person, since one gets a certain satisfaction from one's feelings of compassion under such circumstances; this novel of Miss Irvine's can be recommended, therefore, to those who like occasionally to wipe away an honest tear.

More Books of the Week

China Fights On. Pan Chao-Ying. Revell. $2.50.

MOST OF US know nothing whatever about China and its people. We are notoriously prone to accept well-presented statements uncritically from people of other countries whom we like. Most of us are practically illiterate in the matter of history, our own or that of anybody else. It is truly important therefore to clarify and make up our minds concerning the great majority of the human race, the peoples of the ancient continental cultures of Asia, for we are now inextricably involved in their problems and from now on we have to do something about

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their and our joint problems in building up world civilization. We can't take anyone's simple say-so. It is essential for us to challenge any statement about them that we cannot prove we understand.

Mr. Pan offers an excellent opportunity to do that very thing. He has a positive argument. Its force depends, of course, on his premises. These are two:

(1) The "remote reason" for the world war in its second stage ("World War II" as he calls it) is Japanese aggression in Manchuria, in 1931.

(2) China is a unity. "Manchuria has been part of China since approximately 2200 B.C." "The Manchus are Chinese."

Manchuria is about to be, once more, a center of agreement or of powerful disagreement between the Big Three who are deciding the destinies of peoples. Mr. Pan is making a plausible case for permanent inclusion of Manchuria in China. Japan made a debatable case for the inclusion of Manchuria in the Japanese Empire. Soviet Russia has made a case for the inclusion of several great areas of the former Chinese Empire in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Mr. Pan can perform a great service of clarifying these two declarations of his convincingly.

He quotes the State Department, the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, our late President Franklin Roosevelt, Mr. Henry Stimson as Secretary of State and Lord Lytton's commission for the study of Japanese-Manchurian relations, all agreeing on the correctness of his arguments as to the events of 1931. Some who have been around those areas much longer, with intimate personal knowledge of them, hold that "the remote" reasons of the World War (if one wants to make the distinction between remote and proximate reasons) was the terrific change in Japanese psychology which occurred in and after 1904 through Japan's unexpected victory over Russia, one of the two great empires of the world. It can be maintained successfully that ever since Commodore Perry's opening of Japan by force, Japanese policy had been purely defensive against Western aggression, became aggressive for wide conquest only after that victory, and that the events of 1931 were the "premeditated" fruition of the new psychology of the preceding quarter century. As for Manchuria, there are men living in good health who remember that Chinese and Manchus looked upon each other as two quite distinct races; that no ordinary Chinese could cross the no-man's land of the boundary which separated them under pain of death; and that the present thirty million Chinese inhabitants of Manchuria came in during the twenty years following Russian and Japanese opening of that area to settlement and trade. This is not a challenge to Mr. Pan's accuracy. His whole well-written book hangs, nevertheless, on the convincing accuracy of these two statements of his. Too much depends on our general understanding of how we got into the war in the Pacific and what we now have to do about it to permit any statement to pass ununderstood.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

Commodore Hornblower. C. S. Forester. Little. $2.50.

HIS MAJESTY'S servant Hornblower has been given a new rank, a new ship and new responsibilities. Personally, however, he is wearing a bit thin. The brash and blasphemous braggart is at home in matters of action, but painfully inept and incomplete on land. Perhaps the

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awkwardness is due to shyness: he is matter of fact with his wife Barbara and ill at ease at the Admiralty Office; but he plays the fool when he drinks too much at a regal dinner and slips into the hands of a dimly drawn adventuress.

Before the mast, however, he is his former self. In the current section of the long saga he fights Napoleon's ships in the Baltic, maneuvers Sweden and Russia to do England's bidding in the war against the French, and breathes a sigh of relief when he hears the outcome of the battle of Moscow. Obviously, there are many contemporary parallels, underscored by the author, and the place names are familiar reading to anyone who has followed recent war maps.

The picaresque details which one expects from a sea story are here in abundance: Hornblower prevents a Finnish spy from assassinating the Czar of Russia; he straddles the logs of a boom until he finds a weak spot through which to drive his ships; his fleet serves as naval support for the defense of Riga; he watches and recounts in full detail the French attempt to bring sappers forward to demolish the city; he rides a horse into battle and even fights on foot; he instructs Clausewitz in the niceties of battle. He advances his officers for brilliant supporting thinking, loses a few friends in action and writes dull letters home. In spots exciting, it should serve at least for pleasant summer reading. JAMES E. TOBIN.

Pride's Way. Robert Molloy. Macmillan. $2.75.

LITERARY GUILD selections over a period of time seem to be chosen for a high degree of readability rather than intrinsic literary merit, and Mr. Molloy, as Book Review Editor of the New York *Sun,* might be expected to display a degree of expertness in the medium of fiction. Gentle satire demands the deft touch, but Mr. Molloy makes very heavy going on the first third of his book. Truly, the story, as advertised, could take place anywhere, as it does not have the very Charleston accents and sounds and people of, say, DuBose Heyward's "Mamba's Daughters." Miss Tessie and Miss Julie, who have not spoken for seven years, are drawn in great detail and although I hope that not all pious old ladies are as foggy on the doctrine of indulgences as Miss Julie, the scruples, foibles and prejudices of these two are believable. NORAH PIPER.

Angel in the Forest. Marguerite Young. Reynal. $3.00.

AN OVER-WRITTEN but interestingly written impressionistic account of the Rapp community and the Owenite community which followed Rapp's at New Harmony, Indiana. Robert Owen's utopia faded faster.

The Inner Forum

Maternity Guilds

IN HIS endeavors to ascertain maternity costs in the United States Rev. Joseph J. Schagemann, C.SS.R., of P.O. Box 746, Annapolis, Maryland, leader of the maternity guild apostolate in this country, sent questionnaires to 58 hospitals in all sections of the nation. He had about 50 replies. He found that flat rates for taking care of

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mother and baby for ten days in a hospital ward and delivery by an interne under the supervision of a staff physician ranged from $45 to $70 (pre-natal care and post-partum tests being given free by the hospital's out-patient department). Rates for semi-private and private accommodations are correspondingly higher. The fee for an obstetrician is from $50 up, depending on the family's ability to pay. Normally for private and semi-private patients there are additional charges of about $25 normally for delivery room and other services.

Such figures give an idea as to the financial side of maternity guild activities. These parish groups, which are organized for self-help and mutual help, do not guarantee to take care of all maternity expenses or even to supply a fixed sum of money; the extent of assistance rendered depends upon the state of the guild's treasury at the time. To have ample funds it is recommended that each parish enroll ten dollar-a-year "sustaining members" for every family member. Family members are also expected to contribute regularly, not only in the years during which they may need assistance but also right along. The educational side of the work is equally important, particularly the inculcation of Christian marriage ideals, instruction in child care and opposition to the forbidden practice of contraception. Charitable members engage in the making of layettes for poor mothers and take charge of the home while the mother is at the hospital. The guilds enjoy the special patronage of Saint Gerard Majella as well as of Our Lady and Saint Joseph.

At present in the United States there are some 50 of these guilds in operation. One of the most active, that founded at St. Francis de Sales parish in St. Louis by the present Bishop of Wichita, Kansas, Most Rev. Christian H. Winkelmann, has helped 372 mothers to defray expenses of childbirth; its members have contributed $17,400 in the course of 10 years' existence and the guild has a large reserve fund. The best single source of information is a pamphlet, "The Catholic Maternity Guild Apostolate," obtainable from Frederick P. Kenkel, 3835 Westminster Place, St. Louis 8, Mo. Leaders of this movement do not claim that it is the only solution for Catholic family life problems. They warn members and local guilds of the dangers in bargaining with physicians for lowest possible rates. Organization in a parish is recommended along the lines set forth in Civardi's "Manual of Catholic Action." To be most effective maternity guild work should be coordinated with parish credit unions, diocesan Catholic charities, hospital insurance plans and parochial confraternities of Christian Doctrine.

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard ARVAY at present resides at Fort Ontario, Oswego, N. Y.

Mary FOXWORTHY has contributed to such magazines as *Promenade* and the *Virginia Quarterly*.

R. *H. MONK* is the pseudonym of a member of the armed forces, who writes his purely personal views and hence uses a nom-de-plume.

William Franklin SANDS, in collaboration with Joseph M. Lalley, has recently published "Our Jungle Diplomacy." He served as a diplomat in the Far East for many years.

James E. TOBIN teaches English at Fordham University, N. Y.

Nora PIPER is an occasional contributor to THE COMMONWEAL.

Just Published . . .

A RETREAT FOR RELIGIOUS

By REV. ANDREW GREEN, O.S.B.

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Religious, whether belonging to an order of men or to one of women, make a spiritual retreat every year. Its aim is twofold: to stimulate flagging zeal and to encourage the striving for perfection. Absorption in daily tasks may have obscured the one thing necessary in religious life; the strain of ceaseless effort may have dulled the longing for spiritual progress. Hence the Church, in her wisdom, prescribes an annual retreat.

Many religious are aware that the ideals presented at the annual retreat ought to be a subject of repeated meditation now and then during the year. A volume of retreat conferences is calculated to fill this need.

The author of A RETREAT FOR RELIGIOUS, by his many years' experience as spiritual counselor, is well equipped to guide others on the path of perfection. Appreciating the peace and happiness to be found in community life, he has been able in these conferences to share with the reader the fruit of his Benedictine life. This is a book for meditation or for spiritual reading.

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Next Week

With the speed with which things are happening today, it is difficult to predict with great certainty even a week ahead the features which will be presented in The Commonweal. It is so important in a weekly to save space for last-minute material. Keeping readers up to the minute is more important than a publication schedule. There are two features, however, which we expect to print in The Commonweal next week.

TWO LETTERS, by a French professional man, present a rather extraordinary situation. The first of these was addressed to America early in August, 1940, and returned to the writer by the French postal authorities. He kept it and finally enclosed it in a letter sent to the United States earlier this year. Both letters embody the personal reactions of a distinguished Frenchman—first to national surrender, then to liberation. They produce a remarkable impression as to the reaction of a genuine élite to extreme human vicissitudes.

TROUBLE IN MONTREAL, by John C. Cort, deals primarily with an incident recalled by Rose Pesotta's current book, "Bread Upon the Waters." That was the bitter struggle of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, of which she is a leading member, to organize the French Canadian dressmakers of Montreal, long notoriously underpaid. In the spring of 1937 this struggle reached a climax in which Catholic unions and leading churchmen were enlisted in the battle against the ILGW.

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